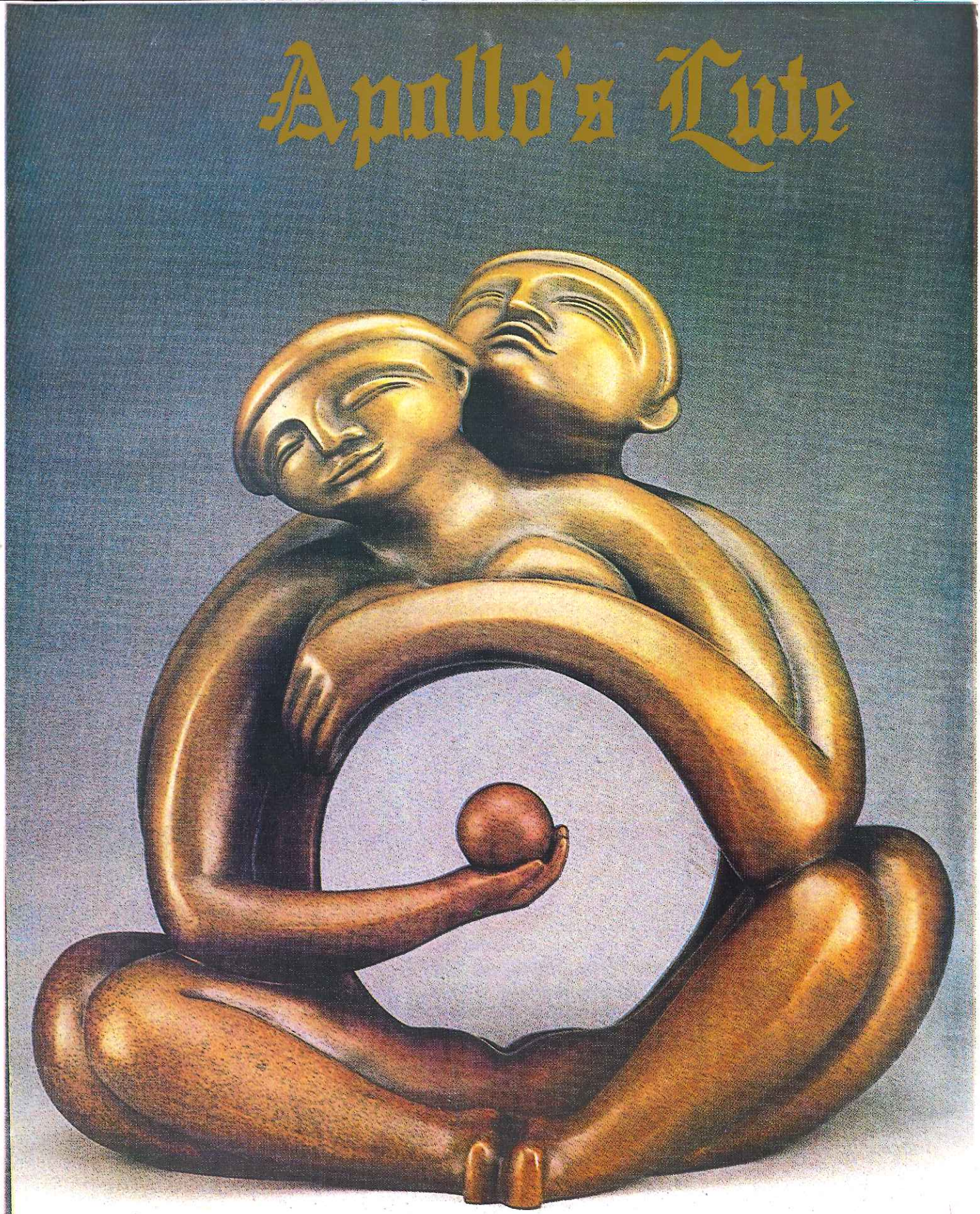
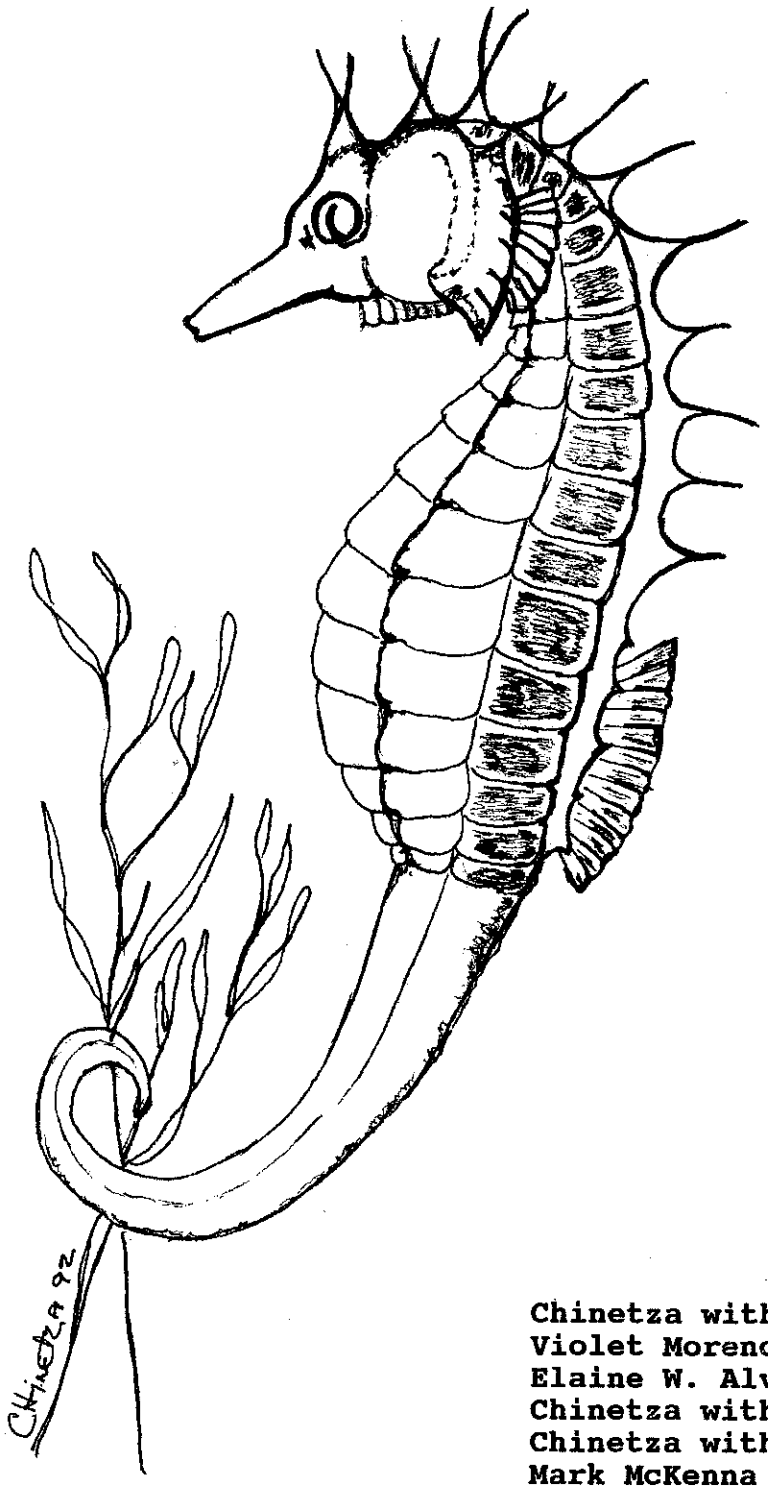
Apollo's Lute



Palm Beach Community College

PALM BEACH COMMUNITY COLLEGE APOLLO'S LUTE



Vol. III Edition I

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The Answer

That tapestries with unicorns and young girls petting them
are medieval fact, or that revolutionaries
warmed potatoes in them (also fact) durring the Terror,
are details that mean nothing and are unknown to my daughter,
who's taken me to Ringling's version of the sexual lore--
father and daughter to meet a goat in make-up.
That it's smart business is proved at the ticket counter.
But it so happens, on the auditorium door
is the photo of a girl abducted last year,
taken by a blue van, who hasn't been found.
Like the hundreds whose faces appear on milk cartons.
Like the hundreds more waiting in turn.
And I'm in no mood as the house lights darken;
my thoughts are elsewhere, with a blue van.
I don't tell her that they cut its horns,
then grafted one that rooted in its forehead.
I don't tell her Ringling is a fraud,
any more than that virgins can take a beast to bed
and not bleed a little. But the world's no riddle
though we'd like to think so. So in the middle
of the one question from the only daughter
I will ever have, I tell her it's not water
or fairy powder that's sprinkled on its coat.
It's chopped aluminum. And I tell her it's a goat.

Stephen Gibson

Author's note

When asked to send one of my favorite poems for inclusion in this issue of Appollo's Lute, after much consideration I kept coming back to the poem above, "The Answer." But why this one and not another?

What I think I like most about "The Answer" is the way the poem surprises me, the way it draws upon "fact" (real and imagined, personal and impersonal), and then recombined those facts into an order and meaning that I could not have anticipated before sitting down to write the poem, but which I "discovered" in the process of writing and rewriting the work--so that, now, much later, the poem seems to me to have a kind of inevitability about it.

Let me illustrate, briefly, just a few "facts," directly or obliquely, presented in the work:

(1) As a child, growing up in New York City, I had, on a number of occasions, visited the Cloisters, a museum at Fort Tryon Park in upper Manhattan, where the medieval tapestries known as "The Hunt of the Unicorn" were displayed.

(2) Much later, in reading about the French Revolution, I came across the curios fact that another set of tapestries, the "Lady With Unicorn" series, was used by revolutionaries to keep their potatoes from freezing.

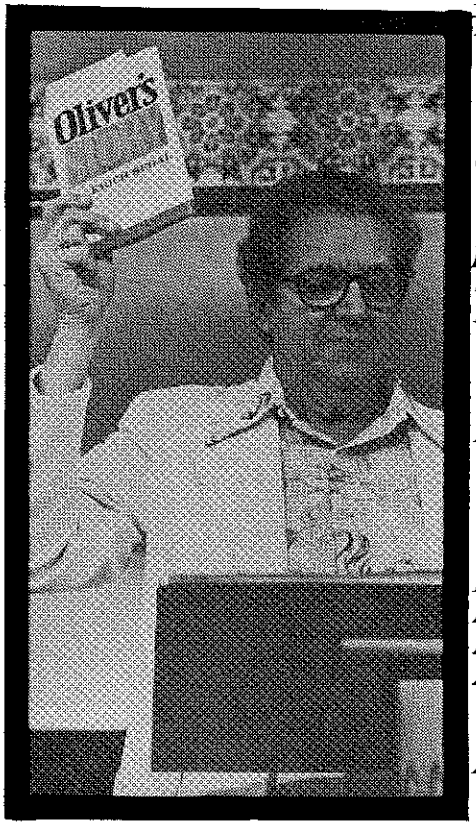
(3) A few years back, Ringling's circus came to Florida promoting what was supposed to be a genuine "unicorn"--a goat with a single horn growing out of its forehead. Much of the circus' advertising centered around the promotion of such a fabled and magical creature being now under the circus' big-top. And, naturally, my daughter asked me to take her to see it.

(4) Also about this time, all along the toll-booths of the Florida's turnpike were photographs of a missing girl, a girl who had been abducted--and who, to this day, has not been found.

These are some of the "facts" presented in "The Answer," but when I sat down to write this work, I had no idea that it would come to be a poem about the conflict of letting a child live in a magical, innocent world (which parents wish for their children), while the parent of that child is also aware that the world is not in all cases magical or innocent at all.

So this is some of my thinking in why I chose "The Answer."

W.B.D. III



We have journeys to make;
your children,
who were not your children,
the fortunate souls,
who saw you as you were;
who caught a glimpse of you
as Tex Ritter,
and Laurence Olivier,
and Troilus himself.
Glistening in the heat of battle.

We never thought you could fall,
perceived you as a god;
immortal, constant and good.
Innocent of heart and agile minded.

We forgot that your body,
Was no different than our own,
Forgot that you too must go beyond,
our merry world,
our happy Camelot,
our noisy theatre.

Now, there is an emptiness here;
A lull where the lilt of your voice should be,
A wall where there once was a window,
A shadow of our laughter on the stage floor.

We must reflect you in ourselves now.
And accept you, in death, as a responsibility.

You shall not perish from this world,
But will live, in our smallest gestures,
and our quietest pains.

Let us then remember what you said,
That "gentleness is the noblest of all virtues"
And let us strive to keep the virtue of your life,
Alive in our actions

D. Block




Violet

Nary a Neonatal Notion

Conceived when heart and ecstatic mind fused in sensual pleasure,
Flooding my ingenious soul - imagination beyond measure;
My mind dilates in literal labor - ideated surges,
In contractions of creative pressure, my 'brain child' emerges.
So new! So perfect and complete! A beautiful part of me!
Holding it close - so protective - only the faintest flaws I see.
Never will I detach myself, but keep this natal cord secure;
Yet, as the artful hours passed, my once lucid light became obscure.

But, I would not cut the cord!!

Parents, seeing my progeny, and its potential as quite nice,
Offered articulate apparel, developmental advice:
Vestures of assonance, robes of fluid alliterative sounds,
Similes of color and theme, measured metamorphic gowns.
Most freely, offering to dress it in grand descriptive emotion,
And to clothe it in sensuality - with stylized devotion.
My newborn needed no clarity, nor objective food for thought!
I would be its only mentor, giving it the true praise it sought!

But I would not cut the cord!!

Wounding my artistic pride, critics incite a noted 'brainstorm,'
Attempting to give formula to my wee conjugated form.
Syncopated balance - these hammering critics want to build;
But to their cry to 'diversify,' I could not in lingo yield.
Falling victim to vanity, its bare body began to wrench.
My perceptive senses were pervaded by self-indulgent stench.
I was attached to a decaying, withering, and noxious cord.
Corruption by subjective infection, I could ill afford.

But I would not cut the cord!!

Alas! My brain-child is dead! Gone, my ethereal translucent fire.
Only trite phrases touch my mental organ, burning with desire.
No sperm of pure genius, only a non-climactic remorse
Uniting with my embryo of fancy: dry intercourse.
I habitually fake it, only going through the motion.
The act is uninspired with nary a neonatal notion.
Parenthetically paralyzed, I must literally grieve,
For now, poetically barren, I can no longer conceive.

But if only I had cut the cord!!

D.S. Gates



Elaine W. Alvarez

Porcelain Dolls

Porcelain dolls with tear stained faces

Stare silently through glazed onyx eyes.

Before them, an ocean of flowers, pink and childlike,

Tries crassly to beautify the morbid truth,

The painful reality of knowing

your exit was intentional.

Frozen and numb,

They continue on, masquerading behind blanched smiles

And words they hope will fill the void

within their souls.

Conversation becomes shallow, superficial

For fear that their fragile shells will be shattered

By the fiery scarlet demons that plague the

very mention of what has happened.

Bound by guilt and confusion, they struggle to

accept that they are blameless-

That you are the one responsible.

But there is no light to guide through this darkness

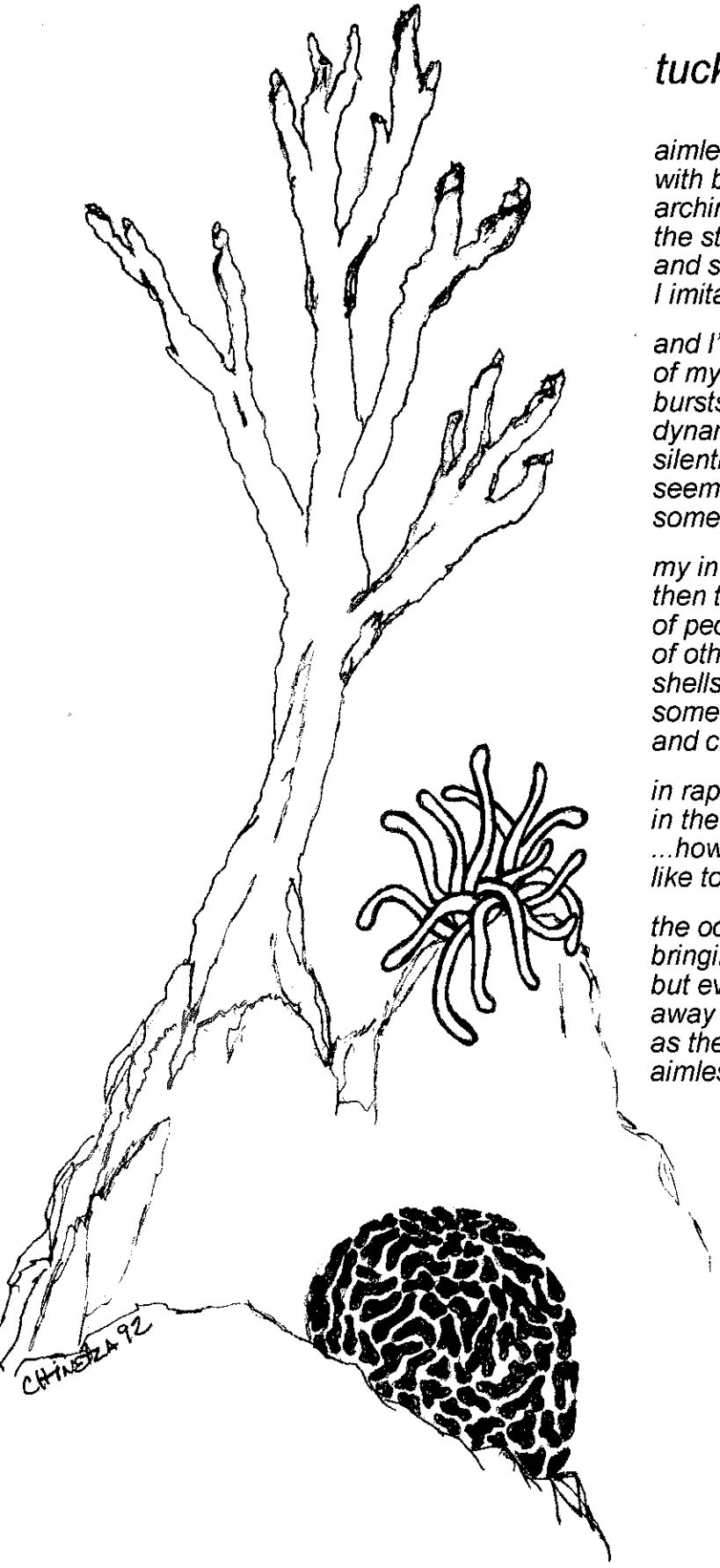
And the smothering doubt persists.

There is nothing here.

Nothing but grief and the resounding blast

Of a single shot.

-Molly M. Grabill



tucked away daydreaming

aimless aimless birds frequent here
with bellies shrunken to the mold of human debris
arching their sturdy backs like cranes to search
the stiffly withstanding seaweed and litter
and standing with the spurs of my ribs sticking out
I imitate the birds and find a sea sponge

and I'm thinking of food as I lick the salt grime
of my lips when
bursts of sunlight through a storm cloud sends its
dynamic message
silently heaping its primal voice upon my skin
seeming to say "I will consume you someday"
something I've always somehow known

my in depth focus on the sponge I found
then turns to find a universe next door
of people crowding over towels like insects at a pinic
of others passing gentle time like the old men picking
shells
some on shining parade brightly lit like flags
and children wrapped in their own arms humming

in rapture I remove my shoes and lose myself
in the quiet theater of the present
...how I can almost read and write the faces
like tourists doing their crossword puzzles

the ocean hums on a visceral level
bringing the Intangible closer to the surface
but even as the Secret brushes past my eyes I tuck
away my token sponge
as the vatic movements of Time push me home again
aimless and uncertain.

Alberto Martin

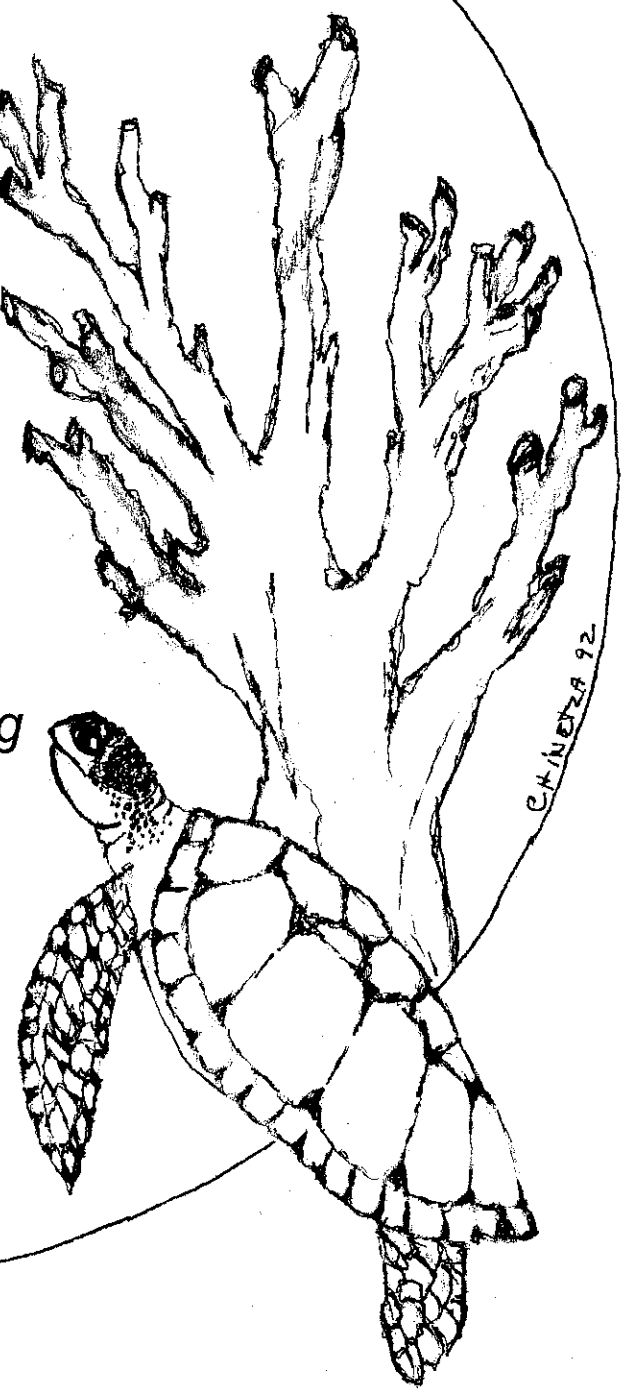
O Amber One

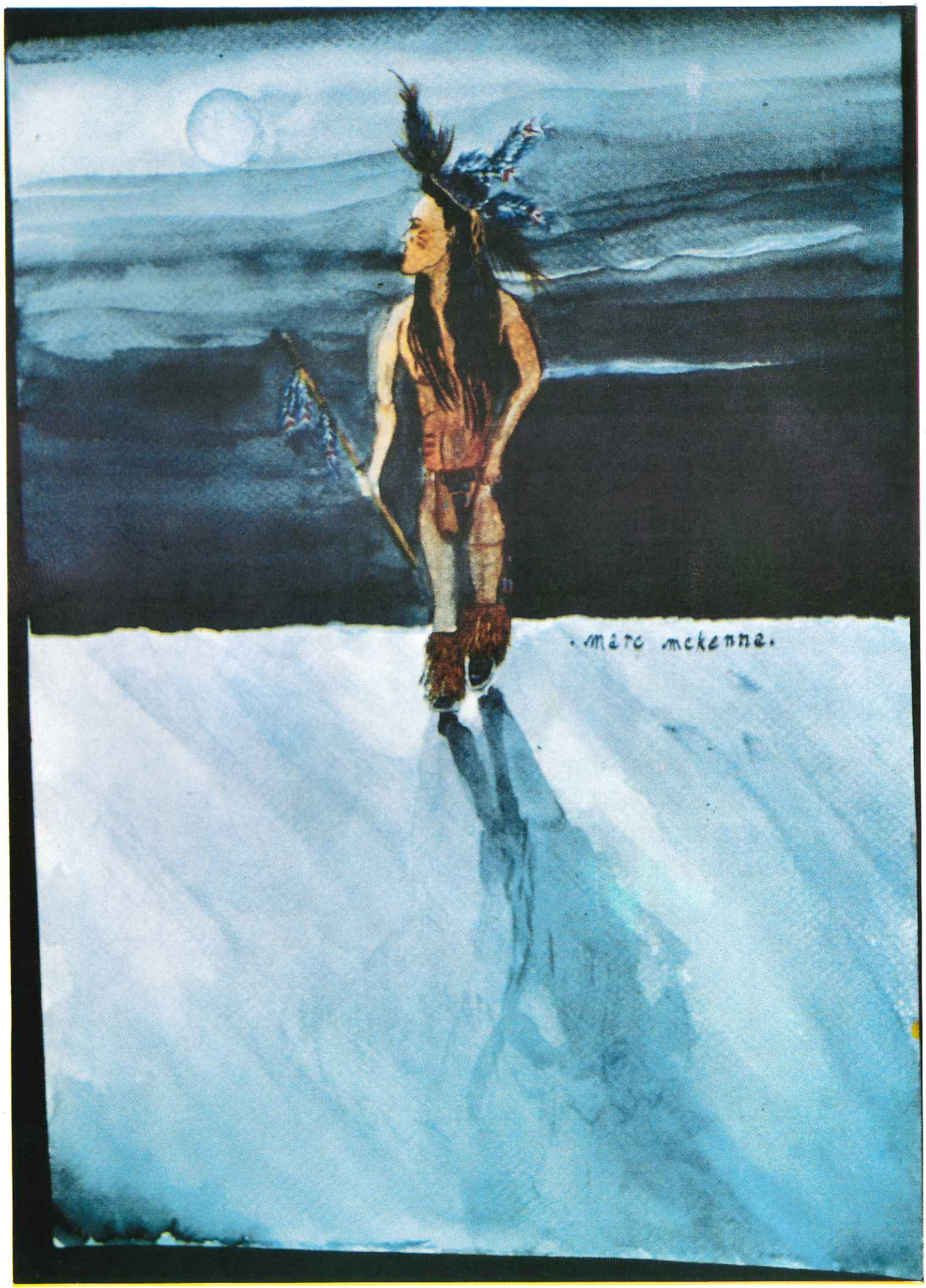
Bring in the softness
Of the glowing amber
Shine oh bright one
And show us your splendor

Open the door
For the wise man to watch
Seeking tender madness
He feels the utter loss

But a new wholeness is coming
And with it a plea
Keep the path clear
For two to meet the sea

Danea C. Leigh




. marc mckenna.

The Last Tale

The day has come,
My eyes may miss the morning.
I have a last tale to share
With the lives of the little ones.

The Great One lifted his mind's eye,
Embers from his mahogany
Fondled the shadows
of his expression.

He spoke...

Black spirits of strength
 owned this land moons past,
Binding the trails of the sacred ones
 to the paths of our people.

The God of the Sun
 blessed our bodies
 with darkened bronze.

The Wind of the West
 kept our voices
 at a whisper.

Our days are filled with young ones,
 yearning to be warriors.
There was so much strength
 waiting for the star of brightness
 to retire to its resting place.

The earth had become distant.
Man with many clothes
Had come to our camps.
A crazy water,
A want for the weak,
Blinded the eye stone
Created two shadows in our people.

My heart hangs on,
The Sun Dance,
A renewal for the tribe.

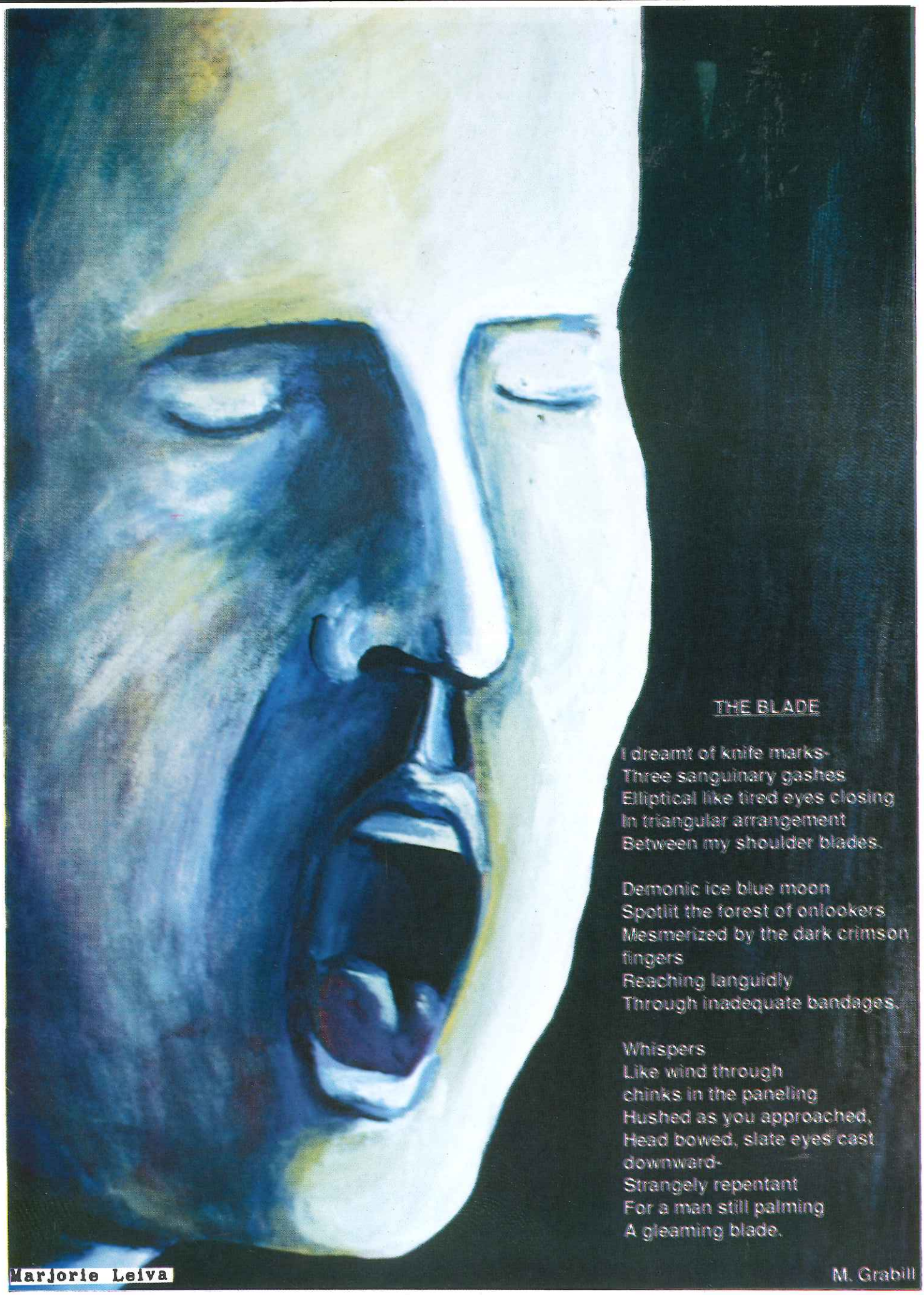
A time to talk of peace
 to tell of truth
 our days to come.

Giving Ones,
Creatures of the trees,
Had left their hiding places,
Moved by a burning enigma,
No longer at one with the land.

The Great One's head fell forward,
Tears from foresight,
Fell upon his hands.

Embraced by a small spirit,
His last breathe left his being,
To journey with the land beyond.

Jodi Susen
-Sunlily Davis-



THE BLADE

I dreamt of knife marks-
Three sanguinary gashes
Elliptical like tired eyes closing
In triangular arrangement
Between my shoulder blades.

Demonic ice blue moon
Spotlit the forest of onlookers
Mesmerized by the dark crimson
fingers
Reaching languidly
Through inadequate bandages.

Whispers
Like wind through
chinks in the paneling
Hushed as you approached,
Head bowed, slate eyes cast
downward-
Strangely repentant
For a man still palming
A gleaming blade.

Marjorie Leiva

M. Grabill



Paths

"Don't walk the same way every time,"
my husband scolds,
"You'll wear an ugly path across the field."

Ugly?
I think a path is
A fine and friendly thing.
It shows someone has gone before,
and you're welcome
to follow
if you want.

"It's like stupid cows, to make a path,"
he adds.

Well,
I wonder, how many roads today
Follow the paths
some stupid cows
made long ago?

I know that is digression,
And really has nothing
to do with my path.
But I like paths.

Besides,
a path may be
the only thing
I leave behind.

And,
I would like to think
I could do worse
then leave a path
to lead someone
where I have been.

Alice Thorp Duxbury

Hello My Tree

hello my tree
can you smell the marigold
I have brought my instrument
I will play it with your body
what colorful music it'll be
eh tree
now that you're only a little scared
Let me lay down a righteousness
brother tree
that maybe, you're just a bit too old
you'll like making paper
little kids will make you into barbie cut outs
aflame with radiant, yellow crayon hair
won't that be nice
dead tree

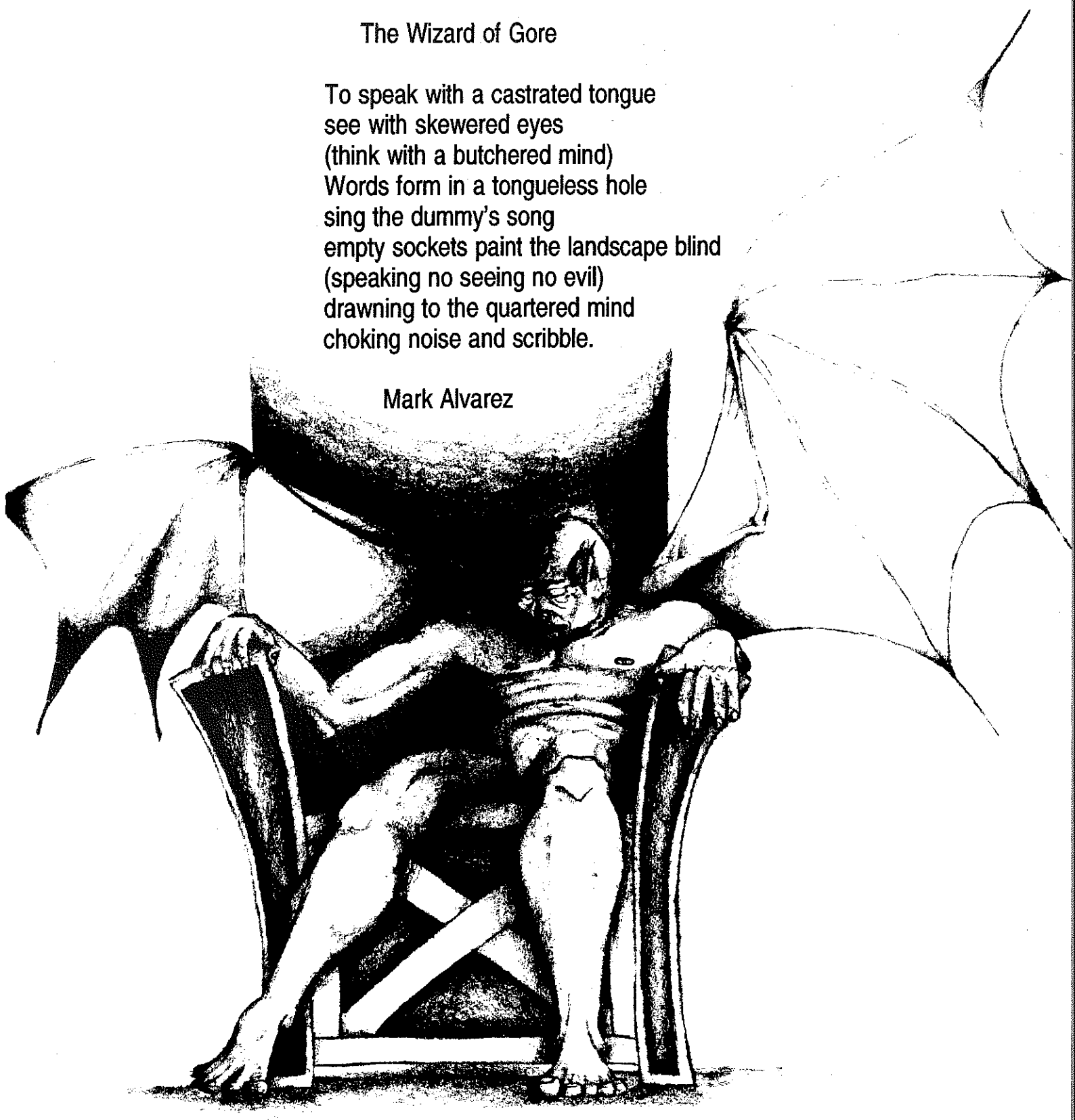
Shawn Blacharski



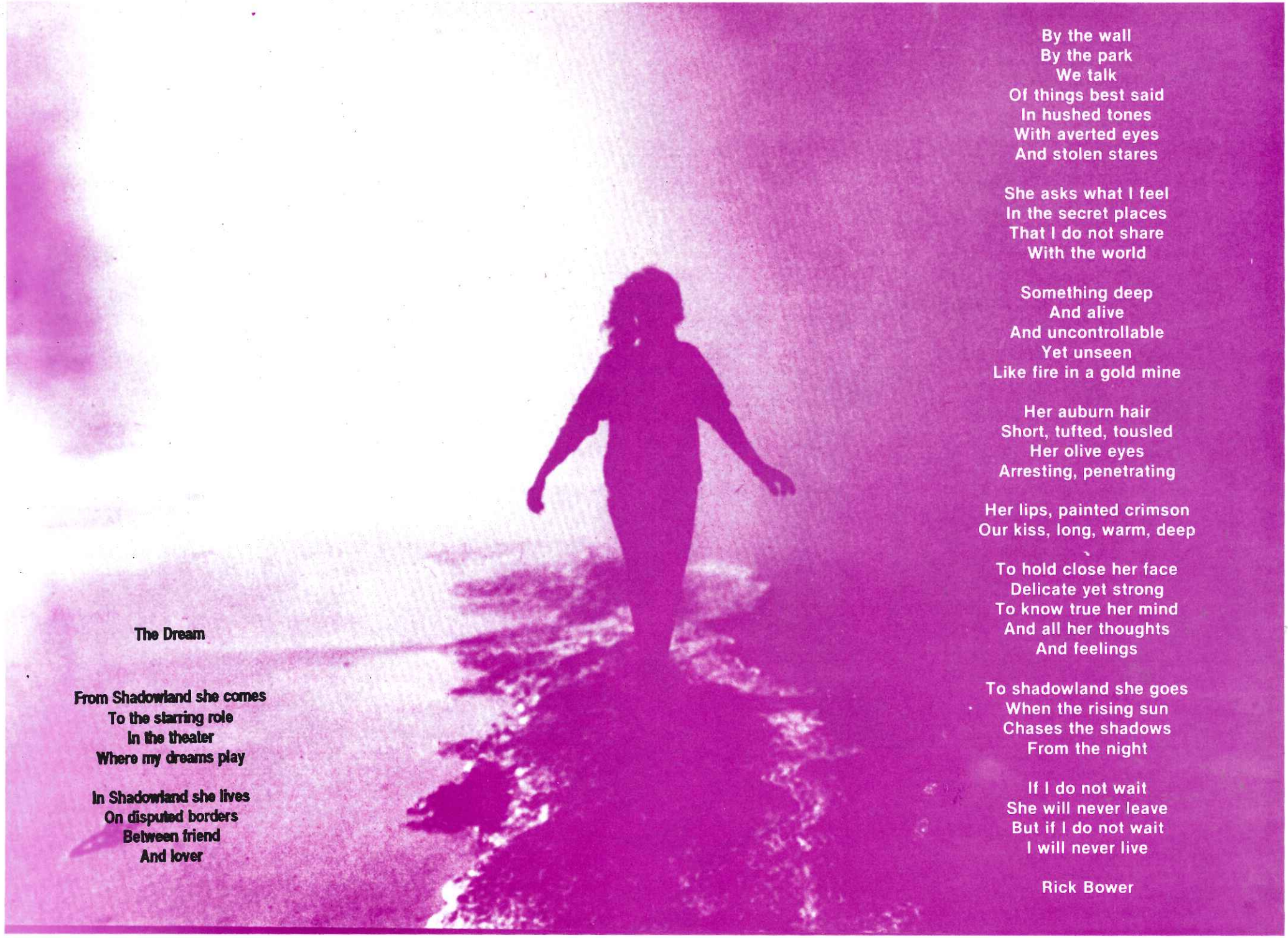
The Wizard of Gore

To speak with a castrated tongue
see with skewered eyes
(think with a butchered mind)
Words form in a tongueless hole
sing the dummy's song
empty sockets paint the landscape blind
(speaking no seeing no evil)
drawning to the quartered mind
choking noise and scribble.

Mark Alvarez



'91



The Dream

From Shadowland she comes
To the starring role
In the theater
Where my dreams play

In Shadowland she lives
On disputed borders
Between friend
And lover

By the wall
By the park
We talk
Of things best said
In hushed tones
With averted eyes
And stolen stares

She asks what I feel
In the secret places
That I do not share
With the world

Something deep
And alive
And uncontrollable
Yet unseen
Like fire in a gold mine

Her auburn hair
Short, tufted, tousled
Her olive eyes
Arresting, penetrating

Her lips, painted crimson
Our kiss, long, warm, deep

To hold close her face
Delicate yet strong
To know true her mind
And all her thoughts
And feelings

To shadowland she goes
When the rising sun
Chases the shadows
From the night

If I do not wait
She will never leave
But if I do not wait
I will never live

Rick Bower



Mineral Meanings

Smooth stones washed upon
like the rolling of mineral tongues against
midmorning windows
and the meaning of my own words
like the rubbing of fingers together

The diffusion of distant sounds
and the good news humming in the jazzy peals
of street noise somewhere
sweetly gumming up the silence

Awake and hungry I gather my pearls
from my girlfriend's lips
roll them in the spread of my mind
and in swallowing

I mind the loose meanings dropping limp
like heavy eyelids
and the shape and form of what she is making
fills me
as the conversation static rises to a hum.

Alberto Martin



Marjorie Leiva

UNSEEN VISION

A star
on the bend of night with day falling:
lessened by the brilliance across the circular field,
almost down.

There unmarked
but for a bright, constant light, I AM.

Far from all distant suns,
rotating in the dwellings of unseen vision,
there and gone to visiting eyes
with the loss of liquid
in gazing blindness
I AM.

Here the emptiness and the glory of being alone
and unseen.
Wandering the dusty and darkening horizons
known only to astronomer's watchful minds.

Now, in some illusion of time's necessities
let the sun go down
that you might see the singular beauty of this star,
existing
as others
in an independent plane,
shimmering gently beneath her self-containing seal.

Alone
showing
concealed
I AM.

Delores Gilbertson

Violet

The Ron Man Dieth

When Ronald Reagan awoke lying in a field of black daisies, he realized that all might not be well. He was staring up at a sky of hot pink, which was actually quite beautiful but still unnerving. He closed his eyes and opened them hoping for this exotic setting to be a dream. Unfortunately for Ron, when he opened his eyes he found the same setting with the small addition of a round, brown face. "Great," thought Ron. "I've been kidnapped by Mexico. Just what I need, Nancy is hitting the tranquilizers harder than ever, and now I am going to have to eat burritos until I'm rescued. I wish I were dead," said Ron into the placid face of the Mexican.

"That's no problem, Ron. You are," said the Mexican in a sweet and pure voice. He then reached into his pocket, removing some documents. "If you would kindly examine this paperwork, you will find that you died a mere hour ago."

"What! You must be one of those whacked Mexicans! Have you been shooting Mexican mud or something? I can't be dead; I'm in good health," said Ron defiantly.

"Correction, you were in good health. You don't have any health about you now. Actually, you really have no body, either, but one has been manufactured to make things easier. Now, please read the documents. They will make things clear," said the Mexican with documents out-stretched.

Ron reached out and snatched the papers quickly, as if the Mexican were Death himself. He then held the papers above him as he was still nestled in his bed of black daises. A review of the papers proved that he was indeed dead. Apparently, according to page 3, he had died while sleeping. This greatly disappointed Ron, as he had always preferred to go down fighting. After forty or so minutes, Ron lowered the papers and stared up into the brown face again. "I know who I am; who in the world are you?"

"We're not in the world, we're in the afterlife."

"What, we're in the afterlife?" said a befuddled Ron. The Mexican rolled his eyes and reached for his back pocket. He produced a card the size of a driver's license and handed it to Ron. It stated that the Mexican's name was Ponago, and he was a licensed afterlife cab driver. It also announced that he was employed by the Friendly Taxi company, the friendliest taxi company in the afterlife. Ron handed the card back and said, "What the hell are you here for?"

"Well, I ate some bad pork and died of botulism-" answered a dreamy Ponago.

"No, I meant, why are you here at this place right now?"

"Oh, I thought you... I am here to escort you to your afterlife counselor," said Ponago with responsibility lurking in his voice. "If you would stand up we could be on our way."

Ron obliged, rising from the bed of daises with the zombie like movements he had perfected in his second term of office. Once up, Ron examined his scenery and found it to be the same in all directions except to his right where a purple cab waited on a road of blue bricks. There was also a large billboard which stated

something to the effect of welcome to the afterlife.

"How did you know where to find me?" asked Ron.

"Simple, these are the receiving fields. Everyone who dies comes here. Take a seat, and we will be off."

A short time later they were cruising along the road which proved to be quite smooth. Along the sides of the road stretched endless fields filled with a myriad of cows and other such low animals. "Uh, Ponago, where are we now?"

"
We are currently passing through the rebirth fields. The animals you see are souls that achieved nothing in life, yet they didn't do anything wrong either. So when they are up for placement, this is their usual destination."

"Oh, I see," said Ron. "But, isn't this rather boring? I mean, weren't they all once human; wouldn't this be like getting downgraded from first class to baggage on a flight?"

"No, no, no. This is all their souls were capable of. It's not our fault; it's theirs!" said Ponago in a lecturing tone. "You create your afterlife on Earth, it's only transferred and put into action here."

Ron quietly absorbed this, assuring himself that he would not be here but in a much more glorious place. He was President. One thing bothered him, though, and he had to ask,

"Ponago, how come you don't talk like a Mexican?" Ponago's head swung around as if hit by a baseball bat. Ron had hit a nerve.

"How come you don't talk like an American?" snapped Ponago.

"I am talking like an American," said Ron with raised brows.

"Yeah, well, to me, you sound like a...a... a... Jackass!" said Ponago in a high tone.

"What, you little wetback! I had a hard enough time keeping you little, grungy people out of California; I don't need you in my afterlife, either. And this bullshit about friendly taxi service, even Nancy is friendlier than this," said Ron in harsh, biting tones.

"You Whitey, Gringo Fascist, I can't believe you're comparing me to your scumbag wife you ha-"

"My scumbag what, I otta' slap you silly! I can do that you know, I was President."

"Don't interrupt me, you husband of a scumbag. If you don't appreciate my services, then you can walk, you asshole!" cried Ponago, who was now in a furor. "Get the f**k out of my cab now, you greaseball whitey!" With that last statement, Ponago slammed on the brakes. Ron, who had been bad and had foregone his seatbelt, slammed up and into the windshield.

"Jesus Christ, you stupid pile of shit! I knew I should have invaded Mexico when I had the chance." Ron turned with these words to snarl at the thorn in his side and was greeted by a brown fist. The blow hit Ron square in the nose, sending him flying out of the cab and onto the road. Immediately after, the car kicked into gear, squealing away. It was the last time Ron would see Ponago.

Fortunately for Ron, he had been removed from Ponago's cab at his destination, or so he guessed. In front of him

stood a five story building of unspectacular size or beauty. Across the front of the building read the words, "Afterlife Counseling, Etc. Founded 1,000,000 B.C. Fully Incorporated." Ron raised himself from his recent resting place on the blue brick road and began walking toward his afterlife.

Part II
The Ron Man Begeth

Upon entering the building, Ron was greeted and led to a waiting room. It was normal, as if in the physical world. So much so, in fact, that Ron kept forgetting that he was dead even though it was a new and exciting experience. After about five minutes, a squat, overweight white man who looked to be dying of a heart attack due to his incredibly heavy breathing motioned for Ron to enter the office. Ron stood and quickly walked in past the dying secretary. Once through the door, Ron continued to examine his surroundings, noticing how modern this building seemed to be. A tall black man stood up from behind a desk, extending his hand upon Ron's entrance. Ron took his hand and shook it gingerly. Ron had never really cared for blacks or Mexicans, and he had already been forced into one or the other's company twice. Ron used some of his "covert" training to carefully wipe his hand on his pants.

"Hi Ron, I'm Tyronne Jackson. I'll be your counselor for your entire stay here in the afterlife. Sit down, sit down," said Tyronne, motioning for Ron to take a seat. "Okay, Ron, I'm sure you have a lot of questions, but let me first outline what we're here to accomplish."

Ron nodded, remembering Nancy's rule #189. Always nod first, then speak only if required.

"First, we will discuss your deeds and accomplishments so that we may properly categorize your past existence." Ron stared at Tyronne with his Iran-Contra testimony look.

"I'm going to ask you some questions, and it would be best for you to answer truthfully. Okay?" said Tyronne with an earnest look on his face.

Ron recognized that he was now required to speak. Ron decided to attempt humor."Uh, Mr. Tyronne. I lack legal counsel," said Ron in quite a jovial voice.

Tyronne grimaced but waved it off with his hand. "Okay, Ron, here we go.What would you consider your religion to be.

"Well...uh...I...uh... could I maybe have a hint as to the right answer here, Tyronne, I mean I really haven't thought about that before."

"What!" exclaimed Tyronne.

"Well you know what thinking is, right? Well, I never really did that, thinking, about what religion I was," said Ron with pure innocence.

Tyronne sat and stared at Ron for awhile until the room had stopped moving. When it had, Tyronne spoke. "Ron, according to our evaluations at ages ten, twenty, thirty, forty, fifty, and sixty, you were never that stupid. Our charts show that you weren't stupid until you met Dan Quayle."

"Well, he is a great guy. I mean if anybody has a grasp on reality, it's Dano."

Tyronne was once again struck dumb."Listen, Ron, we're getting off track, let's move on to the next question."

"I'm sorry Tyronne, I don't recall."

"I haven't asked the question yet, Ron." said Tyronne with a tired and still shocked voice. "Once again, now, let's move on to another question. When you were an actor, how would you describe your morals?"

"Oh, I was pretty great. I think, I should have gotten a few Oscars, especially for Bedtime for Bonzo," said an arrogant and gloating Ron.

"No Ron, I said morals not laurels."

"Oh, morals, I had some. Sure, yeah, lots, yeah, maybe more than anybody ever."

"Ron, that still doesn't answer my question."

"What question?"

"Never mind, let's move on to the next one, okay, Ron?"

"I take the fifth."

"Cut that out before I sentence you to purgatory for a millennia!" shouted a further agitated Tyronne. "Now, Ron, what would you consider your greatest accomplishment as President?"

"Well now, that's a tough question, but I would have to say my economic reforms," replied Ron while beaming like a sunlight.

"So, you're saying that Reaganomics was your greatest accomplishment?"

"Yes."

"Ron do you realize that those programs led to an increase in poverty, crime, and into an eventual recession?"

"Well, no, that's George's fault. He was pushing for recess since 1981, but I told him that he would have to play on his own time."

"Ron, you know I said recession."

"What, I can't hear you, Tyronne. Let me turn up my hearing aid."

"Ron, you can turn it up to the very maximum, but it won't help as you don't have one anymore."

"Well, that's why I'm having trouble hearing you. I need one."

"No you don't, you're dead!" screamed Tyronne.

"No need to yell, Tyronne, I can hear you." said Ron softly.

"AAAAAGGHH, I'm going to kill you again, I am, I am."

"Uh, maybe we should get someone else in here. You look like you need a rest." said Ron in concerned tones.

"I...don't...need...a... replacement; there is only one question left anyway; what did you do to help the environment?"

"Well, the environment, you're talking about Nature and such, right?" asked Ron.

"Yes."

"Oh, well, I allowed more oil to come out of the ground than Carter ever did. So you could say that I cleaned the world under the surface by removing all that nasty oil. But, basically the Environment was George's forte. He became the Environmental President, you know, so I allowed him to make all the decisions."

"So, Ron, let me make sure I'm correct. You are saying that George Bush is responsible for the deforestation of the National Parks of the United States as well as the stripping of natural resources from the planet for use by the elite five percent which you were part of?"

Ron nodded his head along with Tyronne's lengthy statement then finally consulted with himself and said with a smile, "Yes."

Part III
The Ron Man Hell Boundeth

With that word, Ron was no longer sitting with Tyronne; he was in a courtroom with a Judge perched upon a throne of black onyx. The judge was draped in white robes that glowed with ethereal radiance. "Ronald W. Reagan, how do you plead?" boomed the judge's voice.

"Quite well, I was an actor."

"Plead to the charges that you were greedy and made decisions for a country that benefitted you more than the people of such country."

"It wasn't me, it was George; George is the one. I'm innocent, I...I...I...can't recall. I have prostate cancer. You don't know what that can do to a guy. Please don't send me to Hell. I can arrange for Dan Quayle to come; he will, you know."

"Silence, you worm!" boomed the voice. "I find you guilty of all charges. You are sentenced to eternity in Hell, section G-4, Geo-Political leaders, starting now."

"Nooo, it was Nancy, really, don't send me to Hell. Plea-"

The next thing Reagan saw were two, huge, iron doors which opened to grant him entrance. A large sentinel that looked strangely like his dog Tilly motioned him through. Once through, he was told to follow a man who looked like Gomer Pile to his new place of residence. After two days of walking, as there is no other form of transportation in Hell, they arrived.

"Welcome to section G-4." said Gomer. Two guards that were not quite human opened a cell door that they had arrived at and motioned him inside. Once through, the door slammed shut, and Ron was condemned. The inside was large and spacious. Ron was still wondering where all the brimstone and devils were; it was strange. As Ron was comparing reality to religion, a new man came up replacing Gomer. Ron looked over as he began to speak.

"Hello Ron, I am Quisinar, Emperor Adolf's appointed spokesperson and official greeter. Would you please follow me?"

Ron obliged without words, cautiously examining his home for an eternity. He lost count of all the famous faces he had seen sometime after Pope Innocent the III. After a day of walking, they arrived at a palace built of something like Basalt. "Welcome to the palace, our stroll is complete." said Quisinar. Ron followed, in awe of the size of the palace. Eventually they came to two large doors that stretched some fifty feet high and ten feet wide. "Wait, please," said Quisinar.

While Ron was waiting, he thought about some of the residents trapped in this place. He had seen nearly every big name in history, most every King there ever was and almost every Pope ever to decide proper doctrine. Quisinar returned and ushered Ron inside towards Emperor Adolph's throne room. They entered the room which was rich in color and decoration. Hitler stood upon a raised platform adorned with

grey silks.

"Why Ron, so good to finally meet you, I have followed your Presidency and life in general, and I must confess, you are quite a man." said Hitler while smiling like an American politician. "In fact, I'm so impressed that I'm willing to offer you my second in command, if you will accept."

"What, why would I want to serve under you? You're the most horrible monster ever spawned, I don't belong here! I went to church! I was President, for Christ's sake!"

"For whose sake, Ron? I didn't know you were a student of mythology. And what was that, Ron? You don't belong here?" said Hitler, his voice dripping with sarcasm and false sympathy. "Let's examine your first statement of the fact that I'm the most horrible creature ever spawned. Now this, I agree, is true, but aren't you the second? Come now, your Genocide programs, though not as blatant as mine, were quite effective. Black urban youth was a strong candidate for the endangered list. Or how about your desire to become dictator? Your propaganda office was definitely the finest ever assembled. Now, Ron, who was the most horrible creature ever spawned, and how close are you to that?" and Hitler fell silent. His gaze never averted from Ron who had moved onto the stone steps below, and now sat in a crouched semi-fetal position.

Ron sat back upon stone steps, beaten down by Hitler's maniacal gaze. He felt doomed, yet giddy. He thought hard of the words Hitler had thrown at him as he looked back over his life. He never stopped to examine his decisions as he had always based them upon his conservative ideals. Yet suddenly this Hitler guy seemed to be right, perhaps this was his destiny. Ron had one question. "Emperor Adolph, might you have some jelly beans?"

Shawn Blacharski

Ferris Wheel

He gave the bus driver his ticket and sat at the only available seat near the back of the bus. His appearance was messy; his shirt was mis-buttoned, giving a lopsided look to his faded blue oxford while both tails of the shirt draped over his baggy blue jeans.

He crouched low in the seat, squirming around to find a comfortable spot in which to sleep. His head started to bob up and down as his eyes fluttered to stay open. His mind started to drift as he gazed at the countryside through the bus window. He started to think how beautiful the countryside was and how he missed the days when his mom would take him to the county fair each year when he was a young boy. He remembered how much he loved his mom and how much fun it was when she would take him by his arms and swing him around and around in the fields just like the ferris wheel did each year when he and his mom would ride it over and over again, neglecting the other rides. He dreamt of how much fun it would be to go back to the circus and ride the ferris wheel again, just like he and his mom had done so many

summer days. The flashing lights, laughing kids and the smell of popcorn occupied his mind as the bus traveled down the country road.

"Excuse me, sir excuse me," said the young girl sitting next to him. "Do you know how much further it is until we get to Hitchcock? That's where I'm headed. Yes indeed. I'm going to Hitchcock to see the county fair. There's going to be rides and games and food and fun. Yep' a whole lot of fun. What's your name? My name is Sissy, that's what everybody calls me, Sissy. What's yours?"

"What kind of rides are going to be there?" he asked. "Well, actually it really doesn't matter. All I really want to do is ride the ferris wheel. That's my favorite ride."

"Well there's others too you know, like the pony rides, tea cups and the roller coaster. But I don't like the ferris wheel because I'm scared of heights." she added in a motherly tone.

"My name is Ronnie. I really wasn't planning on going to Hitchcock until I saw the fair advertised the other day in the Pittsville Journal. See, that's where I'm from, Pittsville. Well, at least that's where I've lived for the past eight months. I haven't really settled down yet since I haven't found a place that suited my liking. I ain't never really belonged to no place at least since I was eleven. See that's when my mamma died. She left me all alone." Ronnie quieted for a minute as if in anger. "Why am I telling you anything," he snapped, "you are only a little girl and I just turned twenty not more than ten days ago."

"Well excuse me," the girl sassed back. "I may be only sixteen years old but that's no way to speak to a lady."

The girl turned her head in disgust and sat quietly in her seat for the next couple of hours. Ronnie knew he had hurt the young girl's feelings but didn't really care. He knew that she was going to have to learn to be tough and strong when she grew up, so he thought it was alright if he helped her out a little.

After a brief stop in a town about four hours outside of Hitchcock, Ronnie and Sissy started talking again. He asked where she lived in Hitchcock and she told him she had no home. She told him she was on leave from her parents due to family problems. Ronnie shook his head in agreement but could tell that she had run away from home. He wasn't quite sure why, but he could just tell. Country boys had that sense.

"I can't wait till the fair," Ronnie proclaimed in a childish manner. "All those lights and rides. I remember sitting at the top of the ferris wheel every year. From there, I could see my whole town. I'd sit there and point out to my mom where everybody lived, except I'd get real excited and I'd want to stand up. Then she'd take me by the arm and yank me down. She was scared I was going to fall. Every year I did the same thing and every year she told me, God dammit Ronnie, if you don't stop that I'm gonna' have a stroke or something. Sit down and behave yourself before you kill your sweet old mamma. Besides who else is gonna' cook you grits and corn bread every morning."

At that moment, Sissy noticed a change in Ronnie. The boyish grin that came over his face every time he mentioned the fair and his mom had left. His face became tense as his eyes fixed in on the seat in front of him. His childhood innocence gave way to years of hatred and anger. His jaw became tense as she watched his teeth grind and the muscles in his jaw flex with every evil moment. Sissy sat back for a moment, stunned by the sudden change in Ronnie's mood. She looked around the bus aimlessly to let time pass before she started the conversation again.

"Well," she said hesitantly, "since neither of us have a place to stay, why don't we try to find a place together. I don't have bunches of money but I can cook and clean and make the place look decent like."

"Hell no!" Ronnie fired back. "I've been on my own ever since my mamma deserted me and I sure don't need no little girl trying to take her place. I've been without her and I'll be just fine without her and I'll be just fine without you."

Again the girl was hurt by Ronnie's rude remarks but he didn't care. He just crossed his arms, let his head down and closed his eyes for the rest of the trip."

The bus stopped in Hitchcock and Ronnie grabbed his duffle bag and got of the bus. He started walking down the street staring at the banners plastered in every store window advertising the fair. Straight ahead, over the tall pine trees, about a half mile away, Ronnie could see the top of the ferris wheel. His heart started to race as visions of past fairs went round and round in his head. Oh how he wished she had never left him.

Ronnie stopped at a store window to read the carnival ad when he felt a slight tug on his bag.

"Please let me stay with you," Sissy begged. "I don't got no where else to go. I swear I won't be no trouble. None. I swear."

Ronnie didn't answer. He just turned his head, read the rest of the store window and walked down the street until he found a boarding house.

The house was old and run down. The grey paint which had once beautified the house had now peeled away and the grass hadn't been cut in two weeks. He walked inside and found the owner. She was an old lady, about eighty he thought.

"I need a room," he yelled, compensating for her old age.

"Quit yelling," the lady replied. "I'm not deaf or dead but I might as well be with you screaming in my ear like that. I don't allow no couples and I ain't never gonna'."

"I'm his sister," Sissy said quickly, as she beat Ronnie to the reply. "We came on the bus together and besides, he's too old to be any more than a brother to me. I promise we won't be no trouble."

Sissy looked back at Ronnie to get a nod of approval, but only saw his anger and that dead, empty stare from his eyes. It frightened her at first, but she thought he was mad at the old lady for correcting him.

"Here's the key and rent is due every friday so as ya'll don't skip out without paying." She gave them the key and

closed the door behind her.

Ronnie wasn't happy with his new roommate but figured he needed to get a good nights sleep before heading to the festival the next day.

"You stay on your side and I'll stay on mine. Don't touch my stuff and stay out of my way," he commanded as he laid down his bag and sat on top of his bed.

Within moments, Ronnie had dozed off to sleep. Sissy quietly came over to his bed and placed a blanket over him and gave him a good night kiss on his head.

"What are you doing?" Ronnie said startled. "My mamma used to do that when I was little." With that, Ronnie grabbed the top of the blanket, curled up and went to sleep.

The next morning Ronnie woke to the smell of fresh grits and corn bread.

"I figured it was your favorite since your mamma used to cook it for you. Do you like it?"

He had not had that since he left home. He got up and cautiously moved toward the table as if he were stalking his prey, sat at the table, and happily ate the home cooked meal.

"What's wrong?" Sissy asked.

"Nothing'. Its just I haven't had this since the morning my momma died," he said as he stared aimlessly into his plate.

"I don't mean to pry," Sissy questioned, "but how did your momma die? I don't mean to be rude, but you are always talking about her and I was just curious."

"Well, I don't really remember," Ronnie said as he sat staring for a couple of minutes. "I remember my momma and I were having lots of fun. Everybody was laughing and I remember looking at all the bright lights and the pretty sky line. I could see everyone's house...everyone's. And then, then..."

All of a sudden, Ronnie threw his plate against the wall and ran out the door. Sissy had seen this look before in Ronnie. His eyes looked like an empty grave, almost possessed with a hatred and anger that she couldn't explain.

Ronnie returned early that evening only to ask if Sissy was ready to go to the fair. He grabbed a coat and walked out the door as Sissy hesitantly followed him all the way to the fair.

His eyes had not changed much since the morning altercation and the mood was very tense. When they got to the gate, Ronnie got to tickets and headed straight for the ferris wheel.

It was night now, the sky was pitch black with only the brilliant lights from the fair to brighten the sky. The moon was full and seemed to have a devilish grin upon its face.

Ronnie shoved his way in line, pulling Sissy by the hand behind him, dragging her all the way to the front. The wheel stopped and Ronnie jumped on, taking Sissy as his hostage.

"What's wrong Ronnie? Why are you acting like this? You're scaring me," Sissy said as she slid down in the seat as the wheel began to turn.

"Isn't this beautiful up here? This is where me and my momma went every year," Ronnie said as the wheel kept turning. "We are almost at the top!"

"Let me off," Sissy cried.

"I'm afraid of heights. Please, please," Sissy begged, "I'll start to hyperventilate if I stay up here, as tears rolled down her face.

The wheel stopped to let on another passenger as their carriage sat atop the wheel over looking the entire city.

Ronnie stood up, pointing out all the pretty houses around the town. He remembered how much he loved to look at all the houses and tell his momma where everyone lived.

His eyes were set childishly upon all the bright lights and people below when Sissy grabbed his arm and pulled him down. He shook to break her grip and turned around to see Sissy choking from the heights.

"Momma, momma'" Ronnie yelled. "I promise I'll never stand up again! I promise! Please don't die!" He grabbed Sissy's neck with both hands, shaking her violently, squeezing her throat, trying to bring her back. "Please momma, I swear," he yelled, as his hands squeezed tighter and tighter around her neck trying to wake her up. Viciously he shook her back and forth, snapping her neck against the rail as the ferris wheel slowly came to it's next position and stopped.

Tears rolled down Ronnie's face as Sissy sat lifeless in the chair.

He whispered softly, "I only wanted to show you the houses momma, why did you have to die?"

David Muir



Michael Angellio

the window

Sweltering alone through
this stagnant midnight
the constant tiny drip of a leaking faucet
lets me know i'm alive
slowly the tattered curtain undulates
in the humid breeze like a serpentine apparition
 swaying to the cadence of an eerie sonata

i wait
entombed within these walls
that bind and isolate
not unlike the barren cement
 of a prision cell
for him to call home

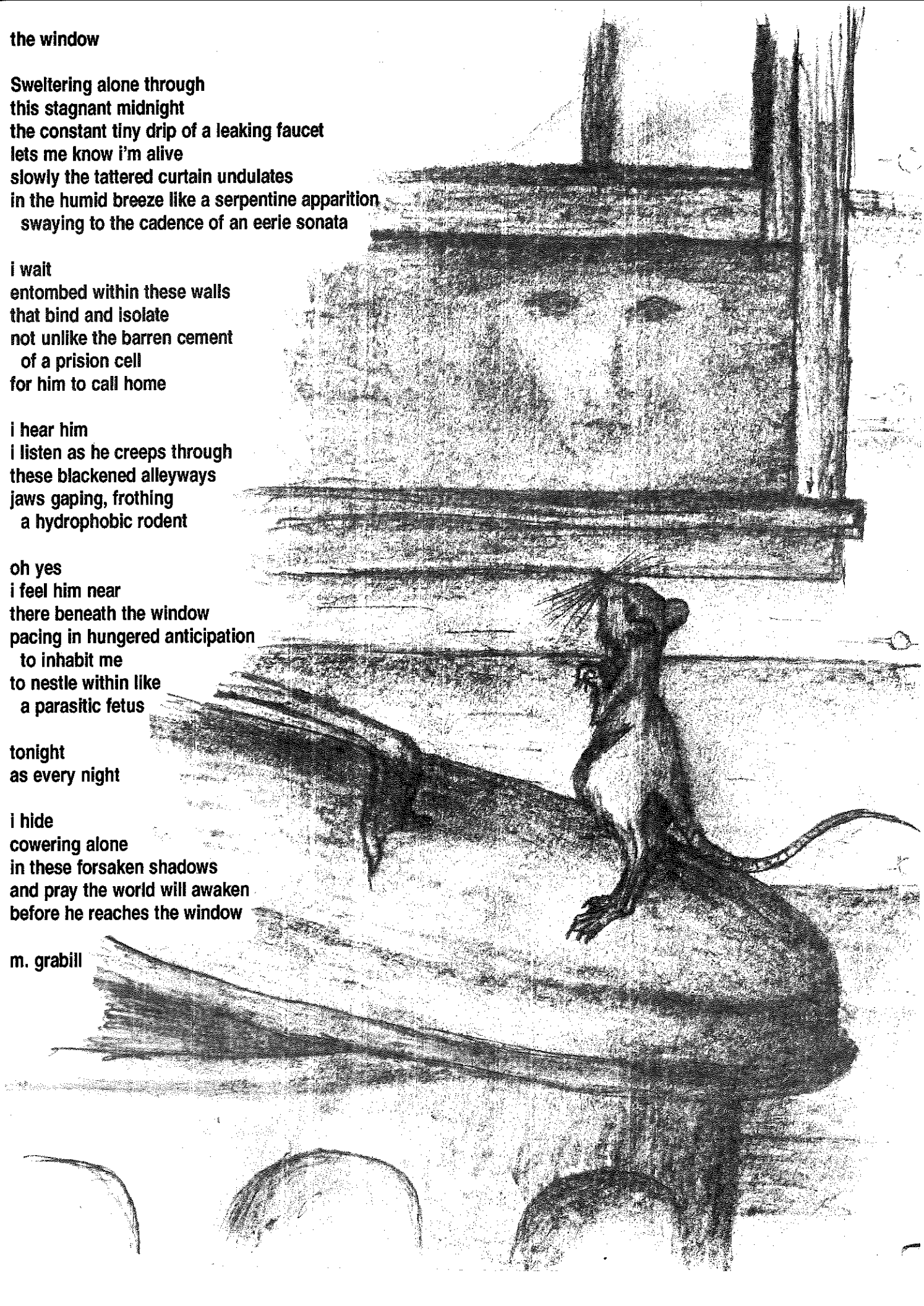
i hear him
i listen as he creeps through
these blackened alleyways
jaws gaping, frothing
 a hydrophobic rodent

oh yes
i feel him near
there beneath the window
pacing in hungered anticipation
 to inhabit me
to nestle within like
 a parasitic fetus

tonight
as every night

i hide
cowering alone
in these forsaken shadows
and pray the world will awaken
before he reaches the window

m. grabill





Violet

The Angel With Siren Eyes

Gazing in her amber eyes
I hear an ancient song
A melody of promised love
I've waited for so long;
Wake from sleep lonely heart
Take wing my soul and fly

The music of the summer stars
Dancing in her voice
Beseeching me come join her
Leaving me no choice;
A primordial longing
Stirs within my veins
Hunger calling upon the wind
Caution quickly wanes.

Silken trees against my cheek
Softer than a mourning dove
Honeyed lips await my kiss-
Ambrosia from above;
Hold her close, oh so close
Feel the passion rise
Seek forever in her arms
This angel with siren eyes.

But from somewhere deep inside
A tiny voice "Beware!"
Remember that the ancient song
Led only to despair;
The reefs of love are jagged
They rip and grind and tear
And Siren eyes like Siren's song
Can lure the foolish there.

Could such as she truely love
Someone as plain as you
When she could posess any man
With just a glance or two?
Did not Beauty spurn the Beast
And does it not make sense
For the princess to scorn the crown
And await the charming prince.

So keep your hunger to yourself
Bury it deep inside
Reef your sails before the wind
Fight the raging tide;
And when the nights are lonely
Beneath starry moonlit skies
Let your dreams return again
To the angel with Siren eyes.

J.W. Perdue

Sherman's Legacy

Whitecaps spread across the sea
as though an artist
has gone mad with her brush. Gods roar
displeasure,
sending wave after wave crashing
onto the beach. A black sky spits
bullets at those who dare
trespass sacred land.
The sand is cold and firmly packed.
Sentinel gulls stand stoically
at land's end. One wails a protest
while gray sandpipers march frantically
in and out to a frenzied beat
with each new wave.
At the front lines,
spindly pines, gods' breath at their backs,
try in vain to stem the tide of mighty
cement and cable invaders.
And across the street, in the staging area,
the reserve bivouac in pleasant, pink barracks,
wait for the gods' anger to subside,
wait for the next assault and
final march to the sea.

Lynda E. Guevremont

My Sun Sang Song

I sat in the shade all day
watching the grass slowly burn
accepting donations of hemp
from the all too happy people
graciously distributing packages
wrapped in banana leaves
screaming love

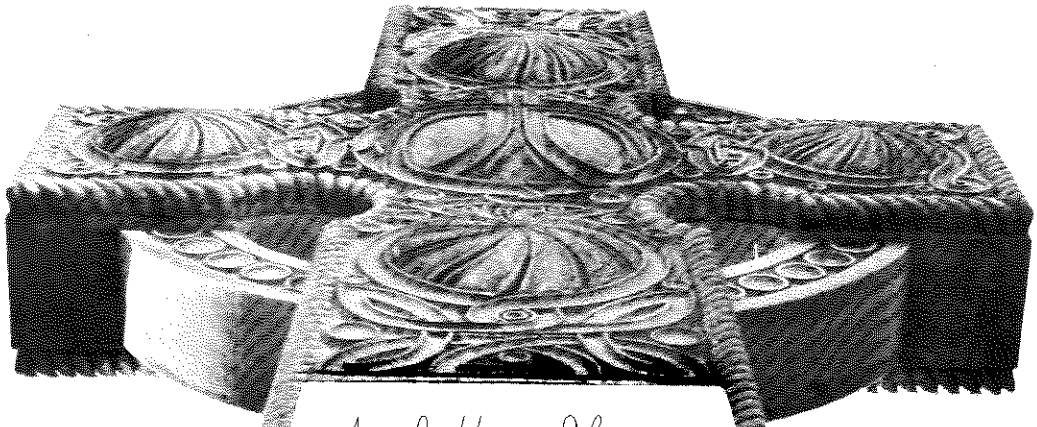
I accepted small flowers
of the violet
only to pluck purple petals
while I smoked my hemp
through an ancient hookah
quietly talking to the caterpillars
while they munched the hemp packaging
and not really saying
anymore than their black corsair
bodies
would allow

I stretched out, allowing the breeze
to tenderly caress my body
allowing it to fondle
the most pale parts of me
readily embracing its soft touch

I napped and dreamt of knights
and nights
full of lust
and much love
surreal visions of a rosy urn
in which im sure I shall be delivered

I awoke
startled
and screamed into the sun
which was frying my flesh
into gold-brown strips
of human bacon

Shawn Blacharski



A Letter Home

Dear All,
Got a job in a crematory.
The incinerator has broken down
and we've resorted to
the decomposition
of all human materials
above ground
until further notice.
Funny how I always thought
that was the continuous process
taking place
among the living.
Much love,
Megan

Gabrial Terwiliger

Angela Jones